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East Park Reservoir Web page:
<http://www.mp.usbr.gov/ncao/eastpark/index.html>

Campground Update Hotline: (530) 968-5274

News Flash!

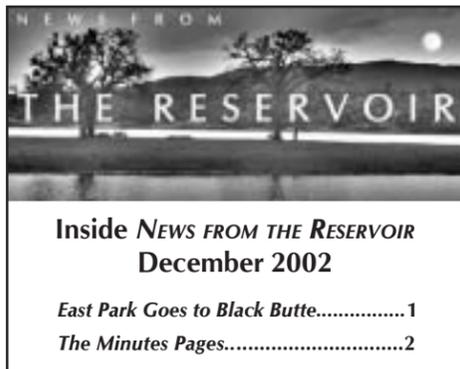


The next work group meeting is tentatively planned for late February or March of 2003, when a draft version of the RMP/EA is completed. During this break, work group members are encouraged to e-mail or call Dennis Kearney with questions or suggestions. As the release date for the draft RMP/EA approaches, Dennis will contact work group participants about the next meeting date. He can be reached at (415) 974-1221, or you can e-mail him at dennis.kearney@tetrattech.com.

Happy Holidays!

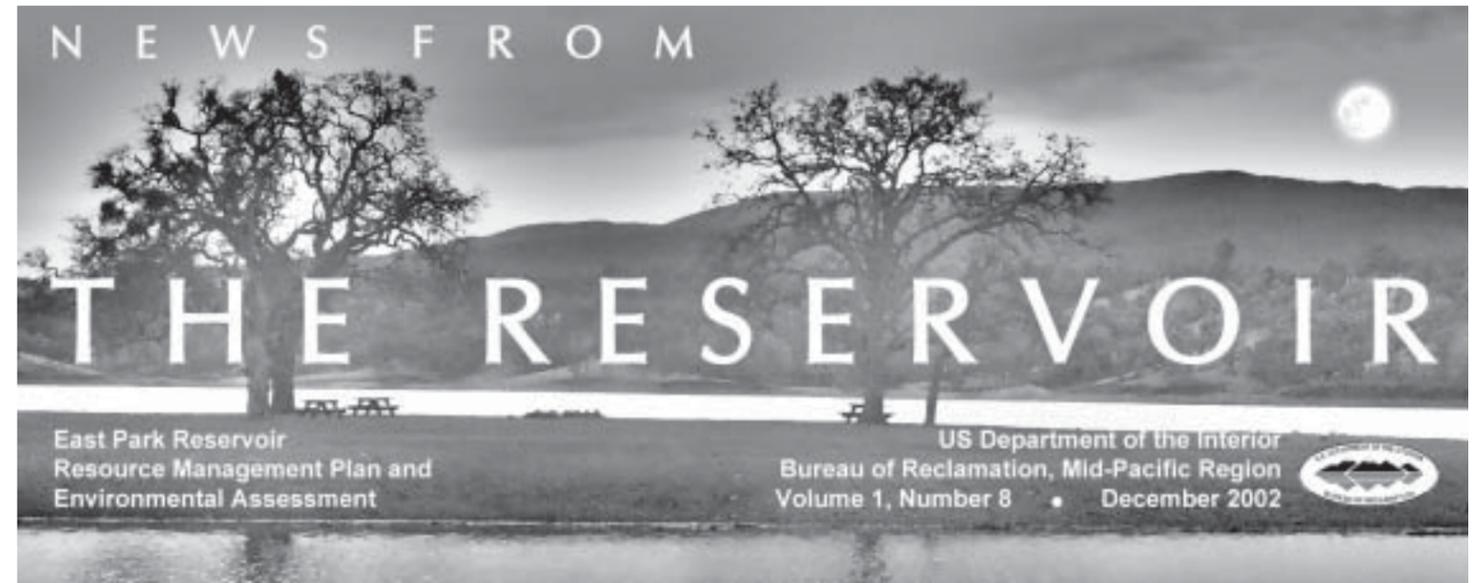
East Park RMP/EA

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East Park Goes to Black Butte

In an effort to develop a carrying capacity plan for East Park, Basia Trout of Reclamation and Dennis Kearney of Tetra Tech met with Senior Park Ranger Brad Long of Black Butte Lake to discuss campsite development at the 143,000-acre lake. Black Butte Lake is in both Tehama and Glenn counties and has three recreation areas to serve the needs of the visiting public. Features include access roads and facilities for picnicking, camping, swimming, boat launching, parking, water supply, and sanitation.

The purpose for visiting Black Butte was to tour the campground development there and possibly use it as a guide for potential future development at East Park. Black Butte was chosen in part because of its proximity to East Park and because it started out very similar to East Park—with no organized camping facilities. After a tour of the various camping areas at Black Butte, most of which were built in the 1970s, it became clear that recreation development has evolved over the past 30 years. While the camping facilities at Black Butte are in good overall condition, in many instances, their original design has resulted in increased maintenance costs.

The following is a brief list of considerations that should be reviewed when developing new campsite facilities. These considerations could also be used in any future campground development at East Park.

- **Restroom placement**—Ensure that the restrooms are in a central location within the campground area and easily accessible from all nearby campsites so that park visitors do not need to cross through other campsites to use the facilities.

- **Number of restroom facilities**—An adequate number of restrooms should be planned according to the size of a particular campground area.
- **Handicapped access**—Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines should be followed when designing ramps, picnic tables, restrooms, and campsite layout. For example, picnic tables need to provide sufficient overhang so that wheelchairs can be pulled up to the ends of the tables.
- **Vehicle “pull-ins”**—These areas (actually “back-ins”) should provide adequate access for larger vehicles; for example, there should be no sharp curves or turns and no trees close to pull-in areas. There should be adequate room to maneuver trucks and trailers, and access and campground roads should be as level as possible.
- **Shade**—Shade provided by trees can be the primary limiting factor for where picnic tables can be located. Campsite tables should be movable so users can place them in the shade if they want.
- **Low density/dispersed recreation**—Day use facilities should be separated from reserved campground areas. Group camping sites should also be located away from other user groups to provide a quality group camping experience.
- **Boat launches**—To help avoid accidents and to not interfere with people fishing, boats should be located in a protected area, away from other users. There are state standards for width, length, angle, and repose of boat ramps.
- **Concessions**—Campers usually bring their own supplies because they often will be in camp for several days at a time. Day users, on the other hand, are often more spontaneous than those who plan to stay for several days, and they tend to spend more money at concessions. So the need for concessions, possibly as an extension of local businesses, in the park should be looked at.
- **Recycling programs**—Most visitors seem to respond well to recycling programs.
- **Hook-ups**—Many facilities are offering water and electricity as standard; others are adding cable and Internet service. This is unlikely at East Park.
- **Internet reservation system**—This is an easy way for visitors to reserve and pay for their campsites before they arrive.



Generally, campers prefer this style of pull-in because they don't have to back in their vehicles; instead they can drive in directly.

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Review of Alternatives Development from Last Meeting

Dennis distributed two handouts. One listed several potential alternatives to examine (this had been covered at the last work group meeting), and the other was a summary of the two alternatives that had been selected and developed at the last work group meeting.

The two alternatives discussed were:

- Recreational development compatible with increased natural resource enhancement and
- Recreational development balanced with natural resource protection.

Alternatives Development and Brainstorming Session Continued

Dennis pointed out that we would need to determine the carrying capacity for East Park and then we would most likely set the number of visitors to be a certain percentage of the carrying capacity under the first alternative. Then the second alternative would be another percentage of the carrying capacity. For example, one alternative might allow only 60 percent of the carrying capacity, and the other might allow 85 percent. Both alternatives would cut the number of people at East Park on a weekend, sometimes numbering 10,000 to 15,000.

Basia noted that, under both alternatives, we could add a bullet that we want the maximum number of people in East Park to be less than the current level of 10,000 to 15,000.

Joyce commented that she originally thought that a gate fee was a bad idea but then accepted it as a good idea because it would provide a way to track visitors, for example by license plates. This may limit crowds and increase crowd control.

Dennis pointed out that we have two good alternatives but that under NEPA we also need to look at "alternatives considered but eliminated from further analysis." It is important for representatives of an agency to say that they looked at all reasonable alternatives before selecting a preferred

alternative, even if they did not analyze all of them.

The group then discussed the idea of having considered the alternative of allowing no recreation at East Park but eliminating it from further analysis.

No Recreation (Maximum Resource protection). What would this mean to the community?

Results of the discussion for this alternative:

- a. Area income would suffer economic disaster;
- b. Greater potential for natural resources but less appreciation of these resources;
- c. Natural resources might become too overgrown;
- d. Vandalism might increase because so many young people might try and get in anyway;
- e. Trespassing could increase;
- f. Less incentive for such projects as nonnative plant control because no people would be seeing areas of potential problem;
- g. Increase in nonnative vegetation and degradation of native species;
- h. Tradition of family gatherings in area would be destroyed (sociological impact);
- i. US Government pilot study would become void, and money from that source would be eliminated;
- j. Pressure on other nearby recreation areas, such as Stony Gorge and Black Butte, would increase;
- k. Potential educational opportunities, such as environmental and recreation education, and employment opportunities, such as Fouts Springs Ranch, would be lost; and
- l. Rangers could lose their jobs.

If we were to decide to have a third alternative, then we could look at a ratio of daily visitors to the carrying capacity of East Park, such as 50 percent, 75 percent, or 90 percent of carrying capacity.

Some other alternatives to the No Recreation Alternative were offered, but

they were dismissed as unreasonable. They included:

- Full development of East Park;
- Providing a trailer park;
- Land sale and leasing;
- Mining; and
- Only some land-based recreation, such as hiking, but no boats, no fishing, and no personal watercraft.

Miscellaneous

Also discussed was the no wake zone. Some felt that the local sheriff does not enforce the No Wake Zone unless there are swimmers in the water, so, essentially, it has been ineffective.

Basia mentioned that it has been challenging to get accurate reports from the Sheriff's Department, which makes it difficult to know what type of violations are happening at East Park. She noted that Reclamation is working on getting accurate reports from the sheriff.

Carrying Capacity Discussion

Carrying capacity for East Park has not yet been determined, but by looking at the Recreation Development Proposal, Basia estimated that approximately 1,000 people on the Lodoga side and 500 at the Stonyford side were numbers listed based on the proposal, which are not reasonable. Also, there could be a day use limit of 370 people, due to parking availability.

Ann addressed the general concept of carrying capacity. A member of work group suggested using the land to determine carrying capacity; that is, how many people and their "stuff" (e.g., boats and cars) the land can hold. This was also discussed as being very subjective.

Need to Know Acreage

Basia stated that we know the acreage at East Park. One way to determine the carrying capacity at East Park would be to mimic the Black Butte sites because they were developed for carrying capacity. The environment and issues at Black Butte prior to development were similar to those at East Park. We could experiment with one area

and then apply that information to the other areas of East Park. At Black Butte they started with uncontrolled use and the Corps developed a plan and made a decision based on what they wanted. The Corps furnishes potable water at Black Butte, but Basia was not sure if we could do that at East Park because it is unclear if the water there is potable.

Some suggested having trial runs in certain camping areas to see what the carrying capacity could be and using volunteers to help restrict where people can go.

Summary: Everyone agreed that it is important to determine the carrying capacity for East Park. Dennis and Basia will work to develop the criteria for determining this.

User Groups

It was suggested that if environmentally aware people visit East Park, those people will have more of a stake in the park; that is more environmentally minded people would take better care of the area than those who go there only to party. Environmentally minded people would not tolerate the rowdy visitors who by and large are abusive to the area.

The issue was raised that local business owners think it is good for business to have 10,000-plus people in area.

- Most in the work group agreed that this was not true. It was noted that when it is too chaotic, restaurant workers lose tips and people walk out without paying for meals because it takes so long to get their checks. The health and safety issues caused by so many people in one place are also not good for businesses.
- It was argued that if there were a shift in the user group to people who care more about the environment (people who are often more educated and have higher incomes), these users would have more money to spend on supplies and food. This may act to balance out the reduction in the overall number of visitors and may end up being better for businesses.

Wrap Up

Dennis suggested that folks look at the East Park Web page for such things as newsletters and meeting announcements. He hoped to have the current goals and objectives and the draft RMP/EA posted as soon as they are completed.

Final questions:

- Gate fee (if adopted in the RMP): Would people have to pay every time they enter East Park on the same day?
 - Basia thought that it would be feasible to implement a day fee/pass.
- Would locals be able to get a seasonal pass?
 - Basia thought that it would be likely.
- Would money from the gate come back into local area?
 - Basia thought it would depend on if there were a contract with local concessionaires. At the present time, if Reclamation collected the fees, those funds would go into the general fund, and could not be used locally. There is legislation pending that may change the recreation policies for Reclamation to policies that encourage more local use of collected funds.
- Would the names of some of the areas at East Park be changing? E.g., Catholic Point? It was also asked if there could be a plaque erected at Catholic Point that contained an explanation of the area's history?

- Basia said there were no plans to change the name of Catholic Point any of the area's names because it would not be developed due to presence of wildlife. This will be reflected in the Recreation Use Proposal. Some of the other names, such as Rattlesnake Point may be changed. A plaque or other historical information may be

incorporated in future interpretive projects. The Bonds said they would dig up some of the history of the area and provide that to Basia for future use.

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- **Campsite erosion**—If campsites are on sloped areas (many at East Park would be), adequate planning should be made to prevent campsite soil erosion; for example, there should be retaining walls, rails (if necessary), and drainage. Sloped areas that are not constructed correctly could result in high maintenance costs in the future.



An example of a typical retaining wall used to control erosion at campsites in severely sloped areas.



By contrast, this more typical campsite is on flat ground and doesn't require a retaining wall to control erosion.

While this list is not meant to be exhaustive, it is intended to provide the reader with an idea of the various elements that need to be considered when developing new campground facilities. These elements will also be used in helping Reclamation determine the appropriate carrying capacity for East Park if permanent campground facilities were constructed. 🐾